DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 129 FL 019 104

AUTHOR Zhang, Xiaolin
TITLE Language Transfer in the Writing of Spanish-Speaking ESL Learners: Toward a New Concept.
PUB DATE 10 Nov 90
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Fall Conference of the Three Rivers Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (Indiana, Pennsylvania, November 10, 1990).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *English (Second Language); Intensive Language Courses; *Interlanguage; Learning Strategies; Second Language Instruction; *Spanish Speaking; *Transfer of Training; *Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT

A study investigated language transfer in the writing of 20 Spanish-speaking learners of English as a Second Language (ESL). Research on language transfer is critically reviewed, and it is concluded that existing theory supports a reconceptualization of language transfer as a form of second language (L2) learning/communication strategy that consciously and subconsciously draws on the learners' previous linguistic knowledge of all kinds and their expectations about the target language. Data are drawn from compositions written on the first day of an intensive English course, and English translations of 16 Spanish sentences after 12 weeks in the program. Analysis revealed 12 types of anomaly stemming from language transfer, occurring in: agreement, article use, capitalization, direct translation, the plural morpheme, prepositional phrase structure, pro-drop, pronouns, tense forms, verb phrase structure, word order, and L2 transfer. Occurrence of the anomaly types changed from the initial to the second data set. Frequency of direct translation, article use, and L2 transfer increased, while pro-drop and word order transfers decreased. It is concluded that this new conceptualization of language transfer enhances the simplicity and explanatory power of theory and helps account for most of the deviant forms in interlanguage. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED329129

LANGUAGE TRANSFER IN THE WRITING OF SPANISH-SPEAKING ESL LEARNERS: TOWARD A NEW CONCEPT

XIAOLIN ZHANG

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Zhang

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Paper presented at the Fall Conference of
Three Rivers TESOL Association
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
November 10, 1990

FL019104

About forty years ago when descriptive linguistics reigned the domain of language studies, the second language learning process was described as nothing but a matter of habit formation and the sole source of L2 errors was believed to be "L1 interference" or "negative transfer" of the learner's native language. Following the advent of the Chomskyan revolution, there appeared in the SLA research area a trend upholding the "L2=L1 hypothesis", which denied language transfer its position as a significant factor in second language learning. In the current decade, however, the pendulum is swinging back. "In the face of increasing quantities of L2 data, researchers have begun again to focus their attention on language transfer, realizing that the baby had been thrown out with the bathwater" (Gass and Selinker, 1983, p.7).

This paper studies the written performance of 20 Spanish-speaking ESL learners. My data evidence that language transfer is a real and central phenomenon in L2 acquisition. Nevertheless, language transfer in its currently widely used sense, i.e., L1 interference or "mother-tongue influence" (cf., Corder, 1967), fails to account for many anomalies present in actual L2 data. It is proposed that we reconceptualize language transfer, i.e., view it as a form of L2 learning/communication strategy, a strategy that consciously or subconsciously draws on the learner's previous linguistic knowledge, which includes not only the knowledge of his/her native language but also the existing knowledge of other languages, whatever little knowledge he/she

has acquired of the target language (be it accurate or inaccurate), and his/her expectations about the target language. Language transfer is thus a positive, dynamic factor rather than a negative hindering effect that has been regarded by many CA scholars and L2 instructors as the No. 1 enemy in L2 learning.

The new concept subsumes what have been termed as transfer, interference, and overgeneralization (cf. Brown, 1987) because the learner's employment of previous L1 or L2 knowledge is a manifestation of one and the same type of mental operation towards one and the same objective. The difference is just a matter of material. The distinction between positive and negative transfer is also untenable in that it confuses process with product. In other words, language transfer, as a strategy in the learning or communicative process, has no positive or negative orientation. What has been labeled as "positive" or "negative" is, in fact, the product of such a process. By introducing the new concept, we intend to rehabilitate language transfer, freeing it from the evil image created by derogatory terms such as "interference," "overgeneralization" and by its customary association with L2 errors. Gass and Selinker (1983) put it rightly: "transfer can have a beneficial effect in that the L1 can provide a ground upon which further language development can take place...even when the results of language transfer appear erroneous from the perspective of the standard version of the L2, there is little reason to believe that that 'error' necessarily inhibits either the learning or the communicative process"(p.16).

I will start from a critical review of previous statements about relevant issues concerning language transfer in the sense it is going to denote in this paper. A summary of my data will ensue, followed by a discussion which concludes the paper.

As has been stated above, the present study is based on first-hand written data from 20 Spanish-speaking adult ESL learners. Table 1 lists information about my subjects.

Insert Table 1 about here

I am using a coding from A to T to represent my 20 subjects. The average length of their formal English study is 3.35 years.

Having made these clear, I now proceed to the literature review.

A Critical Review

Early CA studies were greatly influenced by Robert Lado represented in his frequently quoted statement as follows (Lado, 1957):

> that individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of the native language to the foreign language and culture--both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by the natives.

Starting from his behaviorist point of view, Lado views language transfer as part of the habit formation process. He sees the direction of transfer as moving one-way from L1 to L2, which has

been found to be able to account for only about 5-50 per cent of the deviant forms in actual student L2 production (cf. Heny forthcoming). One idea that is compatible with my new concept is Lado's view of transfer as part of the learner's attempt to produce and understand L2 utterances.

The general validity of contrastive analysis was challenged in the 1970s as the importance of the behaviorist school of thought, with which CA had been associated, declined as a result of the Chomskyan revolution. Influenced by the cognitively oriented T-G grammar, Dulay and Burt (1974) proposed the "L2=L1 hypothesis", attempting to show that the L2 learner's first language did not play an important role in forming hypothesis about the second language. As we will see, my data contradict this claim. However, this trend represented by Dulay and Burt has been influential in SLA research until the late 1970s since which efforts have been made to reconcile the developmental perspective of the cognitively based theory and the language transfer perspective of the CA paradigm (See, for example, Kellerman 1977, 1979; Sharwood Smith, 1979; Zobel, 1980, 1982; Anderson, 1983).

Gass and Selinker (1983 contends that it is "possible and not incompatible to view second language acquisition as both (1) a process of hypothesis testing in which learners create bodies of knowledge from the second language data they have available to them, while <u>at the same time</u> (original authors' emphasis) viewing it as (2) a process of utilizing first language knowledge

as well as knowledge of other languages known to the learners in the creation of a learner language" (p.7).

Thus, the learner's utilization of prior L2 and L1 knowledge in SLA is a unitary, rather than separate, process. This view is important to the proposed new concept of language transfer.

Brown (1987) has made a similar observation. He objects to the misconception that interference and overgeneralization are two separate processes in second language acquisition, contending that "Interference of the first language in the second is simply a form of generalizing that takes prior first language experiences and applies them incorrectly. Overgeneralization is the incorrect application--negative transfer--of previously learned second language material to a present second language context. All generalizing involves transfer, and all transfer involves generalizing" (p.83). We also agree with Brown when he states that transfer, interference, and overgeneralization are "several manifestations of one principle of learning--the interaction of previously learned material with a present learning event" (p.81). Such a stand is obviously congruent with the new concept of language transfer as a learning strategy. What we do not agree with Brown is his distinction between "the facilitating processes of transfer and generalization" and their "negative counterparts", i.e., interference and overgeneralization. Such a distinction tends to direct the attention of both the teacher and learner to the product instead of the process of hypothesis testing, discouraging and

intimidating the acquirer in his/her effort to learn and to communicate.

Like Brown, Schachter (1983) emphasizes the role of previous knowledge in the processes of language learning. Unlike Brown and most others, Schachter views language transfer not as a process in and of itself, but as a constraint on the learner's hypothesis testing process. Moreover, she expands the notion of previous knowledge, which now includes "L1 knowledge and also the learner's conceptualization of the target language" (p.109). In other words, the learner has at his/her disposal the L1 knowledge, whatever has been acquired of the L2, and his/her expectations about the L2, as a set of constraints on the formation of hypotheses about the L2. This notion of the expanded prior knowledge provides strong support to my proposal.

Adjemian's (1983) concept of prior knowledge is similar to Schachter's. While claiming that "The use of past experience in the acquisition of a new task is one definition of the process of transfer" (p.251), he broadens the notion of language transfer, as Gass and Selinker (1983) comments, by including in what is being transferred the learner's knowledge of the target language so that "his concept of prior knowledge, like Schachters, includes knowledge of the L1 (and other L2s) and what is already known of the L2" (p.12).

Another relevant source is Selinker (1972). In his discussion of interlanguage, Selinker proposes the following as the five central processes in second language learning:

> "first, language transfer; second, transfer-of-training; third, strategies of second-language learning; fourth, strategies of second-language communication; fifth, over-generalization of TL linguistic material" (p.215).

It is not the focus of this paper to examine the theoretical adequacy of Selinker's proposal. But several observations may be necessary to show the relevance of his processes to the new concept of language transfer.

Beebe (1988) suggests that Selinker's processes such as native language transfer, transfer-of-training, and overgeneralization "can all be categorized as types of some generic form of generalization, differing only with respect to the source material on which the generalization is based" (p.22). As Brown contends, generalization and transfer are two terms of the same phenomenon viewed from different perspectives. We may as well, therefore, categorize the above three processes as types of transfer, in which native language transfer and overgeneralization in particular are types of language transfer. As to the other two processes, overlapping also exists between themselves as well as between them and the other processes. We prefer to redefine language transfer as a form of learning or communication strategy because (1) language transfer is ultimately motivated by the learner's need, sometimes very urgent need indeed, to learn and to communicate, (2) in examining actual L2 data, it is often difficult, even impossible, to differentiate between instances of language transfer manifesting strategies of learning and those manifesting strategies of communication. Beebe (1988) comments that Selinker's 'second

language learning strategies' could be fit into the basic categories of hypothesis testing and generalization" (p.22). Our contention is that "learning strategy" is the superordinate while "hypothesis testing," "generalization," "simplification," "transfer," etc. are its hyponyms. It is true that language transfer participates in the process of hypothesis testing, which, according to Beebe (1988), consists of five steps (p.22):

1. Identifying the characteristics of a particular target concept or observing a relationship between a new form and one already learned
2. Forming hypothesis based on that identification or observation
3. Testing the hypothesis by producing an utterance or listening for a similar example
4. Receiving feedback on the hypothesis
5. Deciding whether to continue accepting this hypothesis or to reject it on the basis of the feedback

Steps 1-3 constitute what may be called the hypothesis forming subprocess while steps 4-5 make up the hypothesis testing subprocess. Language transfer occurs in both subprocesses, which operate on different materials and on different levels. While the hypothesis forming subprocess draws on prior knowledge of the L1, TL (target language), and other L2s, the hypothesis testing subprocess works on the TL knowledge newly acquired from an analysis of the feedback which may take the form of, for example, teacher confirmation or correction, native example (oral or written), interlocutor comprehension, etc.. The hypothesis testing subprocess occurs on the basis of the hypothesis forming subprocess. Epistemologically, the former operates on a higher level than the latter. Recent studies reject unlimited hypothesis

testing on the ground that learners lack the necessary "negative input" with which to reject the incorrect hypothesis (cf. Beebe, 1988). This may be one of the reasons why the hypothesis testing subprocess is not always complete, resulting in fossilization of the IL (interlanguage) forms. For these reasons, we do not identify language transfer with hypothesis testing.

Support for the new concept also comes from Ausubel (1968), who claims that all meaningful learning requires the relating of new material to knowledge already acquired. He postulates the concept of subsumption, which can be used to explain both transfer in its traditional sense and overgeneralization. The former occurs when the learner attempts to subsume his/her hypothesis--the new knowledge--about the L2 under categories already existing in his/her L1 competence. The latter happens when the learner tries to subsume his/her hypothesis about the L2 under whatever knowledge already acquired of the L2. Both are characterized by the subsumption of new knowledge in the form of confirmed hypothesis under already existing conceptual schema. In other words, L1 and L2 transfers are by nature a single mental operation. This again justifies my proposal for a reconceptualization of language transfer.

Finally, the new concept turns out to be consistent with the Chomskyan theory of government and binding. In the light of this theory, all languages share certain "rules", which are called universal grammar (UG). The UG consists of a set of parameters. To learn a language is to set the parameters for that particular

language. In SLA, the learner's task is to reset the parameters of his/her grammar. As Beebe (1988) indicates, "the acquisition of a second language is complicated by the fact that two languages are now confounding the picture, and it may be difficult to identify clearly the influence of first language, second language, and UG constraints" (p.30). Besides, the transferability of any L1 or L2 material is likewise susceptible to the constraints of language universals. The separation of "interference" as L1 transfer from "overgeneralization" as L2 transfer is, therefore, theoretically untenable.

To sum up, the proposed reconceptualization of language transfer is theoretically well-grounded. The new concept has the merit of greater simplicity and explanatory power than the old ones. Viewed as a form of learning or communication strategy instead of a detrimental L1 carryover that must be eradicated, the new concept is expected to bring about favorable pedagogical results.

A Summary of Data

My data consists of (1) the subjects' composition for the Michigan English Placement Test, which they took on the first day of their intensive English program; (2) their English translation of 16 Spanish sentences constructed specially for this paper. It was given to them 12 weeks after they had been in the program.

The average number of words of the 20 writings is 140.1

completed in 30 minutes. An examination of the data reveals 12 types of anomalies stemming from language transfer, which are to be exemplified in this section. All the examples are original. No errors have been corrected. Only the ungrammatical forms in question are underlined.

1. Agreement

Spanish has much more complicated rules governing agreement. My subjects expect a simpler rule system concerning this aspect in the English grammar. For instance, "do" must have been hypothesized to be the only form that is used with all persons, singular and plural.

1.0. If a person <u>don't</u> have plans in his life, that person isen't nothing.

Similar hypotheses were developed for other verbs:

1.1. . . .it <u>give</u> a scholarship.
1.2. It <u>have</u> much area of investigation.

2. Article use

Most of the anomalies in this category are found to be due to the learners' assumption that English has similar rules of article use to those in Spanish.

2.0. <u>The psychology</u> is a new science in my country.
2.1. I'm <u>in house of</u> a friend american.

3. Capitalization

In Spanish, names of languages, continents, proper adjectives are not capitalized. Hence the anomalous forms below:

3.0. I would like. . .take courses of general culture: . . . <u>french</u>, <u>germany</u> . . . .

3.1. is interesting in that names of countries, which are

capitalized in Spanish, are juxtaposed with names of continents, which are not.

3.1. At the moment, I have known people for europe, africa (Ghana and Kenya).

4. Direct translation

This is probably the most frequent type of L1 transfer among beginning and intermediate learners. It includes word-for-word translation, such as:

4.0. I'm going to learn some sports . . . in benefit of (Spanish" en benificio de) my health . . . .
4.1. But my plan more next (Spanish: mas proximo) is to learn English fast.

and cases where the Spanish word is translated into its English equivalent without observing the English rule of collocability, such as:

4.2. I think (Spanish: pienso) to return in 2 or 4 years.

Sometimes, meaning and structure are transferred at the same time, resulting in anomalies with respect to grammatical categories and subcategorization:

4.3. After (Spanish: Despues), I can help in my country.
4.4. I want help to (Spanish: ayudar a) people.
4.5. I'll like me . . . to serve to (Spanish: scivir a) God.

At other times, direct translation may appear in the form of misuse of prepositions:

4.6. My future plans is . . . to return at (Spanish: regressar a) Honduras.

The Spanish "a" can mean "at" or "to" in English, the "at" sense referring to a completed action while the "to" sense, an action in progress. The learner assumes that English has the same distinction. Other Spanish prepositions such as "por", which is

equivalent to the English "for" or "by" (introducing the agent in passive constructions), and "como," which can mean "as", "like," or "how," may also cause anomalies:

4.7. A favorite teacher is . . . admire for every student.
4.8. I'll like me work in a University of El Salvador how teacher.

5. The plural morpheme

The Spanish plural morpheme is attached to plural nouns, their articles and modifiers. Assuming that English has the same rule, my subjects come up with IL forms such as:

5.0. people from differents contries
5.1. with others Jebb's friends
5.2. a teacher for handicaps kids

6. Prepositional phrase structure

Utilizing their existing knowledge of Spanish about the structure of the prepositional phrase, the learners hypothesize that English also allows the structure in which a preposition is followed by a verb, usually in its infinitive form:

6.0. I want study much for to finish my major.
6.1. After to be in my major, I want to dedicate my time in studies.
6.2. I have arrived to the United States with the proposite of take an English language program.

7. Pro-drop

Spanish is a pro-drop language. My Spanish-speaking subjects expect a similarity between English and Spanish. Examples are:

7.0. I hope can apply my knowledge.
7.1. For me is exciting.
7.2. Desire to know very well the English language.

8. Pronominal anomalies

When using certain English pronouns, my subjects again draw on their existing L1 knowledge. For example, the Spanish "su(s)"

means "his" or "their" in English. However, in countries such as Honduras and El Salvador, it can also mean "your" when the antecedent or what follows is someone that normally deserves respect. In 8.0., for example, "your" refers back to the speaker's parents. What follows "your" in 8.1. is "mothers and fathers". Both of the two "your"s ought to be "their" in English.

8.0. They were who attended me when I was in <u>your</u> house.
8.1. . . . children . . . that are maltrated for <u>your</u> mothers and fathers.

Spanish makes no distinction between the subject and prepositional object forms of some pronouns. Transfer of this form-sharing is exemplified in 8.2. and 8.3.:

8.2. I'll like me work to <u>they</u>.
8.3. I have very appraise of <u>he</u>.

In the Spanish language, reflexive pronouns have the same forms as direct and indirect object pronouns, except for <u>se</u>, the third person singular and plural form. An assumption about the similarity between the two languages leads to sentences such as 8.4. and 8.5.:

8.4. I like <u>me</u> work in that line of investigation.
8.5. I'll like <u>me</u> continue studies. . . .

9. Tense forms

With a background knowledge of a more complicated tense configuration in Spanish, the subjects assume a simpler system in English. This assumption may appear all the more justifiable to the learner when he/she is under the pressure of a learning task or a need to communicate.

9.0. . . . the manager <u>say</u> (said) to me.
9.1. In Panama City, I'm (was) a teacher.

9.2. But I continue (will continue) . . .

Meaning transfer from the source language can also cause anomaly in form:

10.3. When I will return to my country, I hope to carry many opinions.

10. Verb phrase structure

Spanish allows the structure VP => V infinitive. But the Spanish infinitive is not marked by a preposed particle like the English "to" but by end morphemes. Transfer of this marking difference results in sentences like 11.0.-11.2.

10.0. I want make friends.
10.1. I think work in my country.
10.2. I would like travel.

11. Word order

Transfer of the Spanish word order is apparent in the following examples:

11.0. plans academic and professional
11.1. I want to help people that it need.
11.2. I want to teach in my country History.
11.3. . . . the Spanish no is really important. . . .
11.4. a University of El Salvador

12. L2 transfer

The subjects also form hypothesis on the basis of already acquired L2 knowledge. Look at the following examples:

12.0. the peoples of United States
12.1. Many people speaks Spanish.
12.2. I'm going to aplicate for FMGEMS test.

In 12.2. the subject has the Spanish word "aplicar" in mind. He then makes some adjustments with his knowledge of the English word "application" and of English word formation. 12.3. below shows that the subject had learned the general rule of using zero

article before mass nouns to denote generality. He was trying to apply that general rule but to an inappropriate case.

12.3. I'm going to speak all time in spanish.

So far I have described my data about language transfer found in the subjects' writings. Table 2 summarizes the 12 types just exemplified.

Insert Table 2 about here

In my data, there are other anomalies that, owing to the complicated nature of the surface features and my limited knowledge of Spanish, are put in the category of "Undecideds." Also present in my data are six instances of borrowing, which differs from transfer in that the former is an isolated ad hoc occurrence while the latter is systematic and regular. Table 3 shows the proportion of language transfer in the totality of anomalies found in my data.

Insert Table 3 about here

To expand my data, I gave my subjects a translation task of 16 Spanish sentences. Table 4 summarizes the results.

Insert Table 4 about here

The number of undecideds goes down to 5, in addition to one

case of borrowing. Table 5 tabulates their proportional relations.

Insert Table 5 about here

Discussion

My categorization of the manifestations of language transfer is intended for ease of explication. Extreme accuracy is not my aim and is hardly attainable. Overlapping exists, for example, between "Direct translation" and many other types such as "Prepositional phrase structure," "Verb phrase structure," "Pro-drop," "Word order," etc.. I made an attempt to be exact by subsuming anomalies more of a word-for-word nature under the category of "Direct translation" while keeping those more of a structural nature for the other types. Nevertheless, the distinction is often a matter of more or less. That is why the overlapping persists.

A comparison between the results from Table 2 and Table 4 shows that while both of my data have confirmed the important role of language transfer in L2 learning, difference in terms of percentage of certain types across the two groups of data is manifest. "Direct translation" continues to be the most frequent type in Table 4 but the percentage goes up by 12.5. "Article use" in both tables is one of the few types on the top (7.7%; 12.4%). But there is an increase of 4.7% within the 12 weeks.

Pro-drop goes down from 7.3% to 0.5% and "word order", from 7.3% to 1.5%. At the same time, "L2 transfer" rises from 1.7% to 7.5%.

The decrease of "pro-drop" and "word order" types of transfer shows that the learners' perception of the far distance between the L1 and L2 with respect to these two features becomes keener and keener as they learn more and more about the target language. They are beginning to reject the wrong hypothesis about the similarity between the source and target languages. There are however, enough similarities between the article systems of Spanish and English to keep up the chances of transfer. Especially when the learners have acquired more about the English article, most of which is incomplete and inaccurate, they have more sources of language transfer.

The increase of "Direct translation" can be attributed to the mismatch between a fast expanding need and craving for communication on the one hand and a relatively limited repertory of means of expression on the other.

Most interesting is the increase of L2 transfer cases. In the beginning of the English program, most of the subjects put adjectives after their head nouns as a result of L1 transfer. They began to acquire the rule of English word order as they received negative feedback and came to reject the initial wrong hypothesis. At the same time, a new hypothesis was formed on the basis of the newly acquired L2 knowledge, assuming that in many cases English word order should reverse that of Spanish. "Friends American" should be corrected as "American friends"; a university

of El Salvador" should be "an El Salvador university." That is probably why in translating the Spanish sentence "Quiero un vaso de agua," some of them came up with "I want a water glass" instead of "I want a glass of water." It can be predicted that given adequate feedback, they will eventually decide to reject this unwarranted hypothesis. Numerous recyclings of this kind combine to compose the entire process of L2 learning. In this sense, anomalous forms arising from language transfer are developmental in nature. Language transfer is a developmentally healthy and positive phenomenon. The relatively high rate of occurrence of language transfer (one every 12 words in the composition data) should be viewed as a sign of the learners' strong will and urgent need to learn and to communicate in the target language.

As modern learning theories have posited, "human beings approach any new problem with an existing set of cognitive structures, and through insight, logical thinking, and various forms of hypothesis testing, call upon whatever prior experiences they have had and whatever cognitive structures they possess to attempt a solution" (Brown, 1987, p.81). My subjects are very highly motivated. What they can do to fulfill the learning task is to make the best use of whatever knowledge they have already acquired of their native language, the target language, other second languages, as well as their conceptualization of the target language. Viewed from this perspective, language transfer is a learning strategy. It is at the same time a communication

strategy. In all those IL forms in the composition data, one is amazed to find how clever the learners are and how hard they have tried to get their messages across. One of my subjects was so frustrated to be caught in the communication block arising from language barrier, she stopped to write in Spanish. This is where code-switching comes in. One may probably say that code-switching is the extreme form of language transfer. Whatever code-switching could be, its ready and fast takeover when language transfer stops to function may be another evidence of the presence of language transfer as a communication strategy.

With these in mind, we may be able to predict when language transfer will occur. It occurs when (1) there is a need or desire to learn and to communicate in the L2; (2) the learning task or the need to communicate exceeds the learner's current level of learning; (3) the learner perceives the possibility of his/her utilizing prior knowledge for a solution of the problem.

We may also predict from our findings in Table 3 and Table 5 that L1 transfer will overwhelm L2 transfer in the early stages of L2 learning. But L2 transfer will increase as the learner acquires more L2 knowledge. When this happens, the number of borrowing as an <u>ad hoc</u> strategy will go down.

My data show that the new concept of language transfer, with an expanded notion of previous knowledge, has enhanced the simplicity and explanatory power of the theory of language transfer, which can now account for most of the deviant forms in the interlanguage of L2 learners. The pedagogical advantages of

this new concept is that the learner's existing linguistic knowledge of the L1, along with that of L2s and TL, instead of being suppressed, will be encouraged to participate in the process of learning. This does not mean, of course, that we should overlook or encourage the learn's errors. On the contrary, it is just because we view language transfer as an important and dynamic participant in the process of hypothesis testing that we can best predict and tackle with the errors by reinforcing the feedback link. In any event, none of the errors in my data has be found inhibiting learning or communication.

Language transfer has proved to be a worthy and important area of investigation in and of itself. The present study represents an effort to reexamine the phenomenon so as to provide a new account of language transfer that is psychologically more realistic and pedagogically more advantageous. Limited by its data, this study has focused on the role and source of language transfer in L2 learning as manifested in production, or an aspect of production, since phonological transfer, which deserves attention, has not been discussed. Neither have I examined language transfer manifested in L2 comprehension. It is believed that the new concept is also able to account for L2 oral production data and data from L2 comprehension. To validate the claim, however, further studies need to be conducted.

Table 1 The Subjects

Subject	Nationality	Years of Formal English Study	Level of Learning
A	Honduras	2	Int.*
B	El Salvador	2	Int.
C	El Salvador	6	Int.
D	Guatemala	3	Int.
E	Guatemala	3	Int.
F	Honduras	3	Int.
G	Panama	3	Int.
H	Guatemala	3	Low Int.
I	Panama	6	Int/High Int.
J	Honduras	0	Begin.*
K	Honduras	2	Low Int.
L	Panama	1	Int.
M	Nicaragua	5	Int.
N	Ecuador	2	Int.
O	Spain	3	Int.
P	Guatemala	3	Low Int.
Q	Panama	6	High Int.
R	El Salvador	6	High Int.
S	Venezuela	5	High Int.
T	Spain	3	Int/High Int.

* Int.--Intermediate *Begin.--Beginning

Table 2 Language Transfer in the Composition Data

Type	Number	%
1. Agreement	10	4.3
2. Article use	18	7.7
3. Capitalization	13	5.6
4. Direct translation	82	35.2
5. Plural morpheme	15	6.4
6. Prepositional phrase structure	12	5.2
7. Pro-drop	17	7.3
8. Pronominal anomalies	11	4.7
9. Tense forms	16	6.9
10. Verb phrase structure	18	7.7
11. Word order	17	7.3
12. L2 Transfer	4	1.7
TOTAL	233	100.0

Table 3 Breakdown of Anomalies in the Composition Data

Source of Anomalies	Number	%
Language transfer	233	85.3
Undecideds	34	12.5
Borrowing	6	2.2
TOTAL	273	100.0

Table 4 Language Transfer in the Translation Task

Type	Number	%
1. Agreement	9	4.5
2. Article use	25	12.4
3. Capitalization	10	5.0
4. Direct translation	96	47.7
5. Plural morpheme	6	3.0
6. Prepositional phrase structure	9	4.5
7. Pro-drop	1	0.5
8. Pronominal anomalies	4	2.0
9. Tense forms	10	4.9
10.Verb phrase structure	13	6.5
11.Word order	3	1.5
12.L2 transfer	15	7.5
TOTAL	201	100.0

Table 5 Breakdown of Anomalies in the Translation Task

Source of Anomalies	Number	%
Language transfer	201	97.0
Undecideds	5	2.5
Borrowing	1	0.5
TOTAL	207	100.0

REFERENCES

Adjemian, C. (1983). The transferability of lexical properties. In S. Gass & L. Selinker (Eds.), Language transfer in language learning (pp.250-268). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Anderson, R. W. (1983). Transfer to somewhere. In S. Gass & L. Selinker (Eds.), Language transfer in language learning (pp.177-201). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Ausubel, D. (1968). Educational psychology: A cognitive approach. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Beebe, L. M. (1988). Issues in second language acquisition. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Brown, H. D. (1987). Principles of language learning and teaching. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Corder, S. P. (1967). The significance of learners' errors. International Review of Applied Linguistics, 5(4), 161-170.

Dulay, H. C. & Burt, M. K. (1974). Natural sequences in child second language acquisition. Language Learning, 24, 37-53.

Gass, S. & Selinker, L. (Eds.). (1983). Language transfer in language learning. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Heny, J. Learning and using a second language. In V. Clark, T. Eschholz, & A. Rosa (Eds.), Language: Introductory readings. New York: St. Martins. Forthcoming.

Kellerman, E. (1977). Towards a characterization of the strategy of transfer in second language learning. Interlanguages Studies Bulletin, 2, 58-145.

Kellerman, E. (1979). Transfer and non-transfer:Where we are now. Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 2, 37-57.

Lado, R. (1957). Linguistics across cultures. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Schachter, J. (1983). A new account of language transfer. In S. Gass & L. Selinker (Eds.), Language transfer in language learning. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. IRAL, 10(3), 209-231.

Sharwood Smith, M. (1979). Strategies, language transfer and the simulation of the second language learner's mental operations. Language Learning, 29, 345-361.

Zobel, H. (1980). Developmental and transfer errors: Their common bases and (possibly) differential effects on subsequent learning. TESOL Quarterly, 14, 469-479.

Zobel, H. (1982). A direction for contrastive analysis: The comparative study of developmental sequences. TESOL Quarterly, 16, 169-184.